SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR INTEGRATING ON-LINE
USER RATINGS OF BUSINESSES WITH SEARCH ENGINES

ABSTRACT OF THE INVENTION

A computer program product is provided as a business rating system to rank

5   business that are relevant to a given Internet search topic. Business ratings are stored

in a ranking repository that can be optionally searched by the user along with a user-

defined search engine query. The business ratings are compiled from on-line

questionnaires attached to the search engine results and / or on-line surveys obtained

through other web based rating services. The business ratings assess the quality of the

10   businesses in terms of "interactive" criteria such as customer satisfaction,

professionalism, and cost and ease of use of the businesses' products or services. The

business rating system is comprised of an on-line indexing engine, a query transformer,

a search results transformer, a ranking based result sorter, an on-line ranking system, a

metadata repository, and an on-line ranking repository. The business rating system

15   integrates the ratings with the search results, and ranks the search results based on

such business ratings. In this manner, the user of a search engine receives feedback

from other users about businesses of interest. Eventually, businesses with higher

ratings will be ranked at the top of the search list, while business with lower ratings will

be ranked lower.